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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF GENERAL SHERMAN.

THE following letters by General W. T. Sherman have not hitherto been published, and will have an unusual interest at the present time.

The first, written to General Garfield as to the loyalty of General Thomas, is, in its completeness, characteristic of the man. It gives a clear reason, too, for the apparent, not real, wavering of more than one man at the beginning of the Rebellion, when utter chaos stared every one in the face, and when, as under Buchanan, it seemed a question whether loyalty meant standing by the nation or standing by the State. Wavering ceased the moment a new President declared secession to be treason, and that the Union was to be fought for. Whatever Generals Grant, Sherman, and others may have thought of Thomas's proverbial *slowness*, his *loyalty* no man ever dared question in their presence.

HEADQ'R'S ARMIES OF THE U. S., }
WASHINGTON, D. C., Aug. 4, 1870. }

General GARFIELD, Hiram, O.

DEAR GARFIELD: I have your letter of August 1, and will get General Whipple to make up a list of the officers who were with Thomas at Carlisle in 1860-61, and will enclose it with this, noting the address of those who are still living and are accessible. I attach great importance to whatever address you may deliver, because it will in time become *history*, and few men live who knew Thomas in his innermost character, to correct mistakes, if any. I have seen the letter published by Fitzhugh Lee, sustaining his assertion that at the outset of our civil war Thomas leaned to the South. I understand the state of his mind at that dreadful crisis, and see how a stranger might misconstrue him. At the time to which Fitzhugh Lee alludes the Buchanan administration was in power, and had admitted that the federal government could not coerce a sovereign State, and his cabinet did all they could to make army officers feel insecure in their offices.

The Northern politicians, as a rule, had been unfriendly to the army; and when the election of Lincoln and Hamlin was complete, they (the officers) naturally felt uneasy as to their future, and cast about for employment. Several of them, I among the number, were employed at the military colleges of the South, and it was natural that Thomas should look to his friend and (our) classmate Gilham, then employed at Frank Smith's military school at Lexington, Va. Thomas also entertained, as you must know, that intense mistrust of politicians to which the old army was bred, and feared the whole complication of 1860 would result in some political

compromise or settlement, if not in a mutual agreement to separate, in which case it is possible he would have been forced for a support to have cast his lot with the Southern part. It is more than probable that, at the mess-table at Carlisle, Thomas may have given vent to some such feelings and opinions, then natural and proper enough. But as soon as Mr. Lincoln was installed in office, and manifested the deep feeling of love for all parts of the country, deprecating civil war, but giving the keynote that the Union should be maintained even if it had to be fought for, and that forcible secession was treason, then all national men, Thomas among them, brushed away the subtleties of the hour, saw clearly his duty, and proclaimed it, not by *mere words*, but by riding in full uniform at the head of his regiment and brigade, *invading without a murmur his native State*, and commanding his men to put down forcible resistance by the musket. As you can recall the conflict of opinion which preceded the actual conflict of arms, I feel certain you can so paint it that not a shadow of suspicion will rest on his fair fame.

Yours,

W. T. SHERMAN.

One of the historic scenes of the great war is described in the following letter of General Sherman. It is the meeting of Grant and Sherman with President Lincoln on board the "Ocean Queen" at City Point, just before the close of the war, and quite close to the tragic event that ended in the President's death. It is, possibly, the only council of the kind held during the whole war. Certain it is that at no other time during the contest did the distinguished commanders meet the President together.

It was from this interview that Sherman went to receive the surrender of Johnston's army, and it is now confidently believed that, had Lincoln lived to see the event, Sherman's first terms with Johnston would have been approved. Lincoln's wish was for perfect magnanimity towards the South—a magnanimity that has been practised by his successors in fact, even when the principles of Sherman and of Lincoln were in theory condemned.

WASHINGTON, D. C., November 28, 1872. }
Thanksgiving Day. }

Hon. J. N. ARNOLD, Chicago, Ill.

MY DEAR SIR: . . . We arrived [at City Point] during the afternoon of March 27 [1865], and I found General Grant and staff occupying a neat set of log huts on a bluff overlooking the James River. The General's family was with him. We had quite a long and friendly talk, when he remarked that the President, Mr. Lincoln, was near by, in a steamer lying at the dock, and he proposed that we should call at once. We did so, and found Mr. Lincoln on board the "Ocean Queen." We had met in the early part of the war, and he recognized me, and received me with a warmth of manner and expression that was most grateful. We then sat some time in the after-cabin, and Mr. Lincoln made many inquiries about the events which attended the march from Savannah to Goldsboro, and seemed to enjoy the numerous stories about "our bummers," of which he had heard much.

When in lively conversation, his face brightened wonderfully, but if the conversation flagged, his face assumed a sad and sorrowful expression.

General Grant and I explained to him that my next move from Goldsboro would bring my army—increased to 80,000 men by Schofield's and

Terry's reinforcements—in close communication with General Grant's army, then investing Lee in Richmond, and that, unless Lee could effect his escape and make junction with Johnston in North Carolina, he would soon be shut up in Richmond, with no possibility of supply, and would have to surrender. Mr. Lincoln was extremely interested in this view of the case, and when we explained that Lee's only chance was to escape, join Johnston, and, being then between me in North Carolina and Grant in Virginia, he could choose which to fight. Mr. Lincoln seemed unusually impressed with this, but General Grant explained that at the very moment of our conversation General Sheridan was passing his cavalry across James River from the north to the south; that he would with this cavalry so extend his left below Petersburg as to reach the South Shore Road, and that, if Lee should "let go" his fortified lines, he, Grant, would follow him so close that he could not possibly fall on me alone in North Carolina. I, in like manner, expressed the fullest confidence that my army in N. Carolina was willing to cope with Lee and Johnston combined till Grant could come up, but we both agreed that one more bloody battle was likely to occur before the close of the war.

Mr. Lincoln repeatedly inquired as to General Schofield's ability in my absence, and seemed anxious that I should return to N. Carolina, and more than once exclaimed: "Must more blood be shed? Cannot this last bloody battle be avoided?" We explained that we had to presume that General Lee was a real general; that he must see that Johnston alone was no barrier to my progress; and that, if my army of 80,000 veterans should reach Burkesville, he in Richmond was lost, and that we were forced to believe he would not await that inevitable conclusion, but make one more desperate effort.

I think we were with Mr. Lincoln an hour or more, and then returned to General Grant's quarters, where Mrs. Grant had prepared for us some coffee or tea. During this meal Mrs. Grant inquired if we had seen Mrs. Lincoln. I answered, No; I did not know she was on board. "Now," said Mrs. Grant, "you are a pretty pair," etc., and went on to explain that we had been guilty of a piece of unpardonable rudeness. But the General said: "Never mind, we will repeat the visit to-morrow, and can then see Mrs. Lincoln."

The next morning a good many officers called to see me, among them Generals Meade and Ord, also Admiral Porter. The latter inquired as to the "Russia," in which I had come up from Morehead City, and explained that she was a "slow tub," and he would send me back in the steamer "Bat," Captain Barnes, U. S. Navy, because she was very fleet, and could make seventeen knots an hour, etc. Of course I did not object, and fixed that afternoon to start back.

Meantime we had to repeat our call on Mr. Lincoln on board the "Ocean Queen," then anchored out in the stream at some distance from the wharf. Admiral Porter went along, and we took a tug at the wharf, which conveyed us off to the "Ocean Queen." Mr. Lincoln met us all in the same hearty manner as on the previous occasion, and this time we did not forget Mrs. Lincoln. General Grant inquired for her, and the President explained that she was not well, but he stepped to the stateroom, and returned to us, asking us to excuse her. We all took seats in the after-cabin, and the conversation became general. I explained to Mr. Lincoln that Admiral Porter had given me the "Bat," a very fast vessel, to carry me back to Newbern, and that I was ready to start back then. It seemed to relieve him, as he

was afraid that something might go wrong at Goldsboro in my absence. I had no such fears, and the most perfect confidence in General Schofield, and doubt not I said as much.

I ought not and must not attempt to recall the words of that consultation. Of course none of us then foresaw the tragic end of the principal figure of that group, so near at hand; and none of us saw the exact manner in which the war would close; but I know that I felt, and believe the others did, that the end of the war was near.

The imminent danger was that Lee, seeing the meshes closing surely around him, would not remain passive, but would make one more desperate effort, and General Grant was providing for it by getting General Sheridan's cavalry well to his left flank so as to watch the first symptoms, and to bring the rebel army to bay till the infantry could come up. Meantime I asked two weeks' delay and the "*status quo*," when we would have our wagons loaded, and would start from Goldsboro for Burkesville *via* Raleigh. Though I cannot attempt to recall the words spoken by any one of the persons present on that occasion, I know we talked generally about what was to be done when Lee's and Johnston's armies were beaten and dispersed. On this point Mr. Lincoln was very full. He said that he had long thought of it; that he hoped the end could be reached without more bloodshed, but in any event he wanted us to get the deluded men of the rebel armies disarmed and back to their homes; that he contemplated no revenge, no harsh measures, but quite the contrary; and that their sufferings and hardships in the war would make them the more submissive to law.

I cannot say that Mr. Lincoln or anybody else used this language at the time, but I know I left his presence with the conviction that he had in his mind, or that his cabinet had, some plan of settlement ready for application the moment Lee and Johnston were defeated.

In Chicago about June or July of that year, when all the facts were fresh in my mind, I told them to George P. A. Healy, the artist, who was casting about for a subject for an historical painting, and he adopted this interview. Mr. Lincoln was then dead, but Healy had a portrait, which he himself had made at Springfield some five or six years before. With this portrait, some existing photographs, and the strong resemblance in form of Mr. Swett, of Chicago, to Mr. Lincoln he made the picture of Mr. Lincoln seen in this group. For General Grant, Admiral Porter, and myself he had actual sittings, and I am satisfied the four portraits in this group of Healy's are the best extant. The original picture, life-size, is, I believe, now in Chicago, the property of Mr. McCaig; but Healy afterwards, in Rome, painted ten smaller copies, about eighteen by twenty-four inches, one of which I now have, and it is now within view. I think the likeness of Mr. Lincoln by far the best of the many I have seen elsewhere, and those of General Grant, Admiral Porter, and myself equally good and faithful. I think Admiral Porter gave Healy a written description of our relative positions in that interview, also the dimensions, shape, and furniture of the cabin of the "Ocean Queen"; but the rainbow is Healy's—typical, of course, of the coming peace. In this picture I seem to be talking, the others attentively listening. Whether Healy made this combination from Admiral Porter's letter or not, I cannot say; but I thought that he caught the idea from what I told him had occurred when saying "that if Lee would only remain in Richmond till I could reach Burkesville we would have him between our thumb and fingers," suiting the action to the word.

It matters little what Healy meant by his historic group, but it is certain that we four sat pretty much as represented, and were engaged in an important conversation during the forenoon of March 28, 1865, and that we parted never to meet again. . . .

With great respect, yours truly,

W. T. SHERMAN, General.

AN INTERNATIONAL MONEY UNIT.

AFTER the cosmopolitan globe-trotter has muddled his brains by reckoning daily travelling expenses in condors, milreis, pesos, gourdes, doubloons, piastras, sols, kroner, yen, taels, rupees, mahbubs, and florins, he reaches sunny Italy's shores or the isles of Greece with a sigh of relief. He has still to make acquaintance with a new coin, the lira or drachma, as the case may be, but it is the equivalent of the franc and interchangeable with it; and the franc is the monetary unit of Switzerland, France, and Belgium. He can travel from the Mediterranean to the German Ocean without any further worry about money, and when he settles down to studying gulden, dubbeltje and stuivers while crossing the flat marshes that stretch interminably between Antwerp and Rotterdam he wonders why there cannot be a common coin standard for all countries, as well as for five.

Dear to our hearts is our dollar; five times, at least, as dear as the Frenchman's franc; and never would we give it up. Dear to John Bull is his golden "sovereign," as well as his living sovereign of too solid flesh. Any attempt to harmonize the nominal units of the different currencies—to bring pounds, dollars, florins, and francs to a common value—will fail miserably. Fortunately this is not necessary, if the basis of a common monetary unit be made of comparatively small value. The franc, already the unit of five considerable countries, and approximated in value more or less closely by the Spanish peseta, German mark, British shilling, Danish crown, and Yankee quarter, offers, perhaps, the best basis for such an agreement. Let us suppose that an international convention, arbitrarily fixing a certain standard of weight and fineness of metal, both for silver coinage and gold, should agree that all these coins of most common use should conform to that standard, and should be current in all the countries subscribing to the agreement. Our quarter, slightly decreased in value, would then become the American representative of the common coin, and interchangeable with the shilling, franc, crown Danish, and the coinage of the French-Swiss convention. Our dollar would be four units; our half-eagle twenty units, and the equivalent of the sovereign, Napoleon, and twenty-mark piece. The senseless minor British coins, the florin, crown, and half-crown, would bear their present relation to the lighter shilling. The Dutch florin would be two units, the Portuguese milreis four, the ruble two, the Mexican dollar three or possibly four. No nation would need to learn new names or discard familiar ones, which is always a difficult process, as the American fondness for the word "shilling" long after the coin's departure testifies. Minor coinage could well remain as it is. Pence, cents, centimes, and pfennige would trouble no one if all could be referred to a common unit.

The tourists of the earth spend every year from \$300,000,000 to \$500,000,000 in wandering in strange lands; and at least 1 per cent. goes to the money-changer. Commercial intercourse would be facilitated, as well as the woes of the tourist lightened, by the existence of a coin bearing different names